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ABSTRACT

This paper offers ten detailed suggestions to help units of the Association of Teacher Educators meet present and future needs in education. These suggestions cover areas including a) the creation of a survey group of teachers to act as a reference group, b) quality assessment of student teaching, c) cost assessment of student teaching and the collection of data with an already available formula, d) assessment of professional practices, e) operational efficiency developed by a bulletin with suggestions for setting up a focal point and enlarging a task force to insure that all agents involved in operating school-age relations are represented, f) standards for cooperating teachers, g) performance-based criteria for certification, h) selection into teacher education, i) design for an early major experience for all prosepctive teachers, and j) new arrangements for student teaching and teacher education centers. Other more general suggestions include ATE organizational and statewide concerns, important issues at several different levels, and individual institutional concerns. A final observation suggests a 5-day conference of 20 to 30 committed professionals to study a design-strategy session for state activities or a planning session for methods to aid individual colleges upgrade their education programs. (MJM)

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MU ATE

R_x for a Healthful State ATE Unit

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Rx FOR A HEALTHFUL STATE ATE UNIT

A single individual, no matter how knowledgeable, cannot make a sharply focused set of suggestions for appropriate and vital activities for a state ATE unit -- rather he can only throw out numerous ideas from which responsible leaders can choose those that appeal to the members and fit the indigenous situation. As a baseline, it is important for the leaders to assess for the organization its past record, its present circumstances and its ambitions and goals for the future.

"How does an organization attract and hold a large and enthusiastic following?" There are at least two major answers to that question, but in any case dynamic leadership of people from the "can do" generation is a necessity!

1. Develop a product that people need and find really useful! The better mouse trap idea.
2. Find ways for people to do things together, things that really matter, that are exciting, that solve problems, that meet needs and bring genuine satisfaction!

Many different kinds of professional-personal satisfactions appeal to people. Some are joiners; some are gregarious, socially oriented; some are hermit scholars; some are action-oriented and want a chance to do things (witness the present college generation). Some just want to do their thing -- to teach -- and will welcome inspirations and ideas that support their value systems, while many want simple, useful ideas and aids that work and will help them do better what they are going to do anyway. Organizational activities should be chosen and designed to meet these needs, desires, and values of the membership!

"How does an organization or faculty bring about change in the behavior of its members?" While many approaches are used, two stand out as being especially effective: dynamic, imaginative leadership; and the task force approach! Dynamic leadership was accepted above as one of the necessary givens in any really effective organization. But leadership alone, without involved participants, is hardly enough in 1971 for maintaining a vigorous, voluntary organization! The specific suggestions to be given here consist of ten different TASK FORCE ideas, plus a list of other topics which could be used in the same way, but might be more commonly picked for attention. Add to the task force idea the practice common to military training of using the cadre principle -- get an experienced small group ready to "infiltrate,"

to accept subordinate leadership roles in new groups, and thus to spread ideas and practices at the grass roots level.

Criticisms of Teacher Education have been numerous and sharp for many years, while the more in-depth analyses and insightful evaluations have become more frequent in the last five years, especially those criticisms concerning student teaching and laboratory experiences. During the 1960's much progress was made in developing applications of a variety of media, including extensive use of audio and video recorders; and of perfecting a wide range of special types of experiences such as micro-teaching, simulation, the use of inter-action analyses, etc. Even so, much of the effort in Teacher Education during the 1950's and the 1960's was spent in developing procedures to improve teacher education of yesterday -- what used to be, and never will be again. During the 1970's the "software" must be developed to go with the already present "hardware" -- that is, programs and materials geared to present and future needs, as well as much more efficient "know-how", knowledge of how to design experiences to meet well defined objectives of a much wider range than formerly.

Task Force Suggestions

Task Force #1. Survey Group, Teachers: Select a most able and concerned teacher -- A T E member -- as a Teacher Education leader. Have him (masculine will be used throughout although many of the most dedicated and effective workers will be women) and a small group of his choice, contact A T E members in colleges located in the region of the state where he works, to get nominees from each college of the one or two most active and concerned cooperating teachers. Use these as a reference group to react in depth:

(a) To evaluate existing state bulletins and other pertinent materials.

(b) To gather problems of Cooperating Teachers.

(c) To gather the real needs and desires of Cooperating Teachers for assistance.

Feed this information three ways: to any group working on bulletins for the state, to program committees for any interested organization, to a task force to draw up plans for a brief, simple bulletin for first-time Cooperating Teachers anywhere in the state.

Task Force #2. Quality Assessment: Choose any persons throughout the state interested in improving the quality of student teaching and/or in evaluation. Solicit the

assistance of people in both schools and colleges in gathering simple data on the number and quality of functional experiences during student teaching. A simple form is available which quickly removes all doubt as to the great range -- from the "couldn't be better" to the "ridiculously bad" -- in both the variety and quality of experiences. Nothing spurs activity like genuine facts -- evidence. Develop an eight to 10 page booklet with the form, the process, the evidence, and encourage its use.

Task Force #3. Cost Assessment: Select a group of college administrators of student teaching, together with some public school coordinators. Have the group invite college directors of student teaching to participate in a cost accounting study of student teaching, and assist them in the complex task of gathering data with a formula already available. Publish the facts in a four to eight page booklet keeping the identity of colleges confidential but let each college know how its figures compare with others.

During this decade the fraction of the college budget for teacher education is not likely to be any larger than now, or until the defense budget is cut more than 50%. Many claim that student teaching is the most expensive professional course, but don't realize that in numerous colleges the income from student teaching also helps to support much of the rest of the professional program. It is high time that Teacher Educators knew the facts! In this day of professional negotiations, guessing isn't good enough!

Task Force #4. Professional Practices Assessment: Identify several A T E members who are very active in state and local teacher groups, and invite a few carefully selected key professionals from such groups, plus administrators, school board members and state department personnel. Arrange several work sessions in regions, leading up to a state conference. Look at the clauses concerning student teaching and teacher education in existing negotiated agreements around the country. Hammer out a few carefully designed guidelines to assist all parties to develop much more intelligent and acceptable negotiated arrangements in this area. Develop a small 12 to 16 page bulletin and disseminate widely.

Already hundreds of school districts have clauses in negotiated contracts concerning student teaching and teacher education, and teachers' organizations as well as student groups are beginning to negotiate such conditions with colleges. This is

a new and vital area of professional activity; the task is difficult, but extremely urgent. Cooperative effort can produce much more useful arrangements than often come out of hard bargaining with little advance spade work!

Task Force #5. Operational Efficiency: Identify all public school, central office personnel who are assigned some operational responsibility for the teacher education activities within their systems. Pick a small number of the most interested, experienced and concerned. Develop two thrusts:

First, prepare a four to six page bulletin with suggestions for setting up a focal point in each school system, where respected, experienced central office personnel can assume real leadership in teacher education. The goal is to establish an office, a primary channel, through which a school system can have a vital impact on evolving teacher education -- to give public school personnel genuine first-class citizenship in teacher education. Disseminate the bulletin to all school administrators and school board members in the state, as well as to teacher educators in colleges.

Second, enlarge the task force to insure that all agents involved in operating school-college relations are represented. Convene a one-day workshop just prior to an A T E meeting. Select competent people to prepare working papers of extracted principles from school administration theory and suggested procedures from the student teaching literature. Challenge the conferees to hammer out a set of suggested operational guidelines for effective school-college relations. Prepare a temporary, (mimeographed or zeroxed) 16-page bulletin, disseminate to all parties involved, and to their respective organizations, superintendents', prinicpals', etc. etc. etc.; try out for two years, work to get principles adopted by these official groups, and review every two years -- not every 10 or 20 years. Changes come so fast that two years is long enough before a careful review!

Task Force #6. Cooperating Teacher Standards: Experience with certification of cooperating teachers has been very disappointing! Often the standards are so high that they can't be met by many colleges; until finally everybody ignores them and they become absolutely meaningless. Or the standards themselves seem to have little relevancy to the effectiveness of cooperating teachers. But meaningful standards are important, and should be made effective! All research shows that the cooperating teacher is the most important, single factor in the laboratory phases of teacher

education. There has to be a better way to upgrade quality and A T E Units should be searching diligently! Here is a suggested approach.

Select a representative school-college panel of persons nominated as the most knowledgeable, able and experienced people, in a likely area of the state for ease in working together. After much study including a survey of opinions from a wide sampling of state people, develop the most realistic and appropriate proposed standards the panel can devise at this time. Develop a form by transposing all those items from the proposed standards into questions which can be answered factually by cooperating teachers, and prepare in duplicate. Get official support for having every teacher who has prime responsibility for directing a student teacher to fill out this duplicate form at the conclusion of each student teaching period. The original copy should go to the state department through the college official channels, and the duplicate should go to the state department through public school official channels. (Such a process involves all parties, and maintains continuing attention to this matter.) Using state statistical services run the data and disseminate the results widely to all concerned officials every year. When it appears that any one of the standards' items is likely to be met by applying some additional suasion, make it a requirement and make it stick. The formula; (1) design standards' items, (2) gather data and tabulate annually, (3) enforce items when enforceable, and not before!

Task Force #7. Research Team A, Performance Based Criteria for Certification: (Of the many possible topics for cooperative research efforts, only three will be spelled out here! All are topics currently engaging the attention of many institutions.) Find and select the most able and interested persons in this particular area. First, who knows the most; second, who's doing the most; third, who's willing to work and to share. After preliminary planning the First target, a clinic in early September to share ideas, to invite critiques, to evaluate information available. Second target, a bulletin on WHAT, HOW, RESULTS SO FAR, PROBLEMS, ISSUES, SUGGESTIONS! Third target, a research design to gather data to update bulletin later and to lay a more secure basis for practice.

Task Force #8. Research Team B, Selection into Teacher Education: Same process, same targets as in 7, above. This is a very difficult area, but one in which teacher educators must find a defensible process during the 1970's or teacher education goes

down the drain! The effect of teacher dropouts and non-committed job holders is unquestionably more serious than the effect of pupil dropouts. Elaborate schemes which can be neither financed nor staffed will not be much help, while naive schemes may accomplish little and still draw violent criticism and legal opposition.

Task Force #9. Research Team C, Design for an Early Major Experience for All Prospective Teachers, (EME for APT): Same general approach as 7 and 8 above, plus the question, "Who's willing to try out new designs and share the results?" The Bulletin of some 20 to 30 pages might include; basic conception, guidelines for design procedures, a few varied examples, cost data and formulae for determining cost, and evaluation suggestions.

Task Force #10, New Arrangements for Student Teaching and Teacher Education Centers, Plus, Plus Related Practices: Focus of task force might be research (as in numbers 7, 8, 9 above) developmental, dissemination, or other. Some of the important questions: Who's doing what? Who's got interesting ideas? What are the conceptual bases? Are feasibility and cost data available? Are in-depth experience or evaluation data available? What does the literature say? What consultant service is available for schools and colleges? A bulletin similar to that in number 9, above, would be very useful.

General Observations: Perhaps, no state A T E unit could mount all ten of these task force activities, and some Units would find few members interested in some of the topics. Most states would have special problem areas which would be high priority topics for that particular state. The record of genuine change and innovation in student teaching and laboratory experiences in the some 1200 teacher preparation institutions in the U. S. is not good. Some rather sharply focused group activity is necessary to overcome the preoccupation with carrying on the status quo under heavy loads.

How can a state unit of A T E get started in this type of effort? One way would be to challenge 20 to 30 committed professional teacher educators to take their own time and money and arrange a five day work conference sometime before the autumn term. Use the study-work sessions either as (1) a strategy-design session for state activities, or (2) a planning session for ways that individual colleges could plan to upgrade some aspect of their teacher education programs.

List of Additional Task Force Suggestions

A T E Organizational Concerns

1. Establishing local units of A T E.
2. Establishing interlocking relationships with other organizat[illegible].
3. Establishing effective, broadened teacher education leadership.
4. Planning for effective activity in the political-legislative arena.

State Wide Concerns

5. Establishing a comprehensive legal basis for student teaching.
6. Developing a long-range, comprehensive state plan for developing and operating high quality student teaching and professional experiences.
7. Establishing a comprehensive state plan for the in-service education of cooperating teachers.

General Concerns, or Important Issues at Several Different Levels

8. Developing plans for better financing of teacher education.
9. Establishing teacher education councils.
10. Identifying and making effective new levels of policy development.
11. Researching leadership functions in teacher education activities.
12. Evaluating the effectiveness of diverse teacher education programs.
13. Arranging for effective continuous dialogue for members of job-alike groups, such as directors of student teaching, coordinators of teacher education in public schools, etc.
14. Improving professional communication on teacher education matters.
15. Arranging more effective dissemination of research information.

Individual Institutional Concerns (other than included in the general category above)

16. Getting more effective teacher education materials into the public schools.
17. Designing individualized instruction and experience patterns in professional education courses.

A little boy was asked "What do you want to be when you grow up?" He replied at once, "Possible!" The interrogator was somewhat taken aback, and asked for an explanation. "Oh, that's easy," said the little boy, "Everybody is always telling me that I'm impossible! I'd like to be possible for a change." Indeed, units of A T E need to attack those things that are "possible" for them at their stage of

development; but it is high time that they vitalize their organizations by seriously and intelligently attacking some of the real problems in teacher education, and doing it cooperatively so that many people get involved in an exciting, demanding and rewarding process.

Missouri Unit, Association of Teacher Educators
1971-72

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